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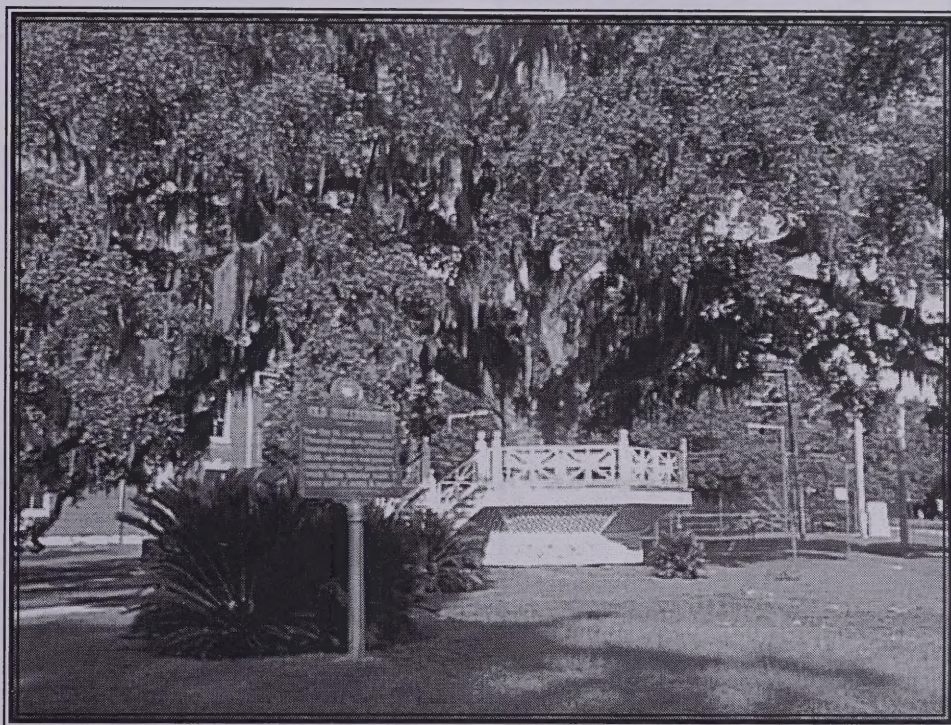
February 2013

## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, February 21, 2013, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be Ellis Cuevas, Publisher Emeritus of *The Sea Coast Echo*. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. Please call **by noon on Wednesday, February 20, 2013**, to make your reservation, to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-eight people, and to apprise us of the number for whom to prepare. The price of the lunch is \$10.00.

## MEMBERSHIP FEES

The 2013 Membership Drive is on! It's time for current members to renew their membership in the Historical Society and to encourage family and friends to join us too. The price of membership is twenty-five (\$25) per year. The date on your address label is your date of membership expiration. **If your label says 2/12 or before, it's time to renew!** Please mail your renewal checks to Hancock County Historical Society, P. O. Box 3356, Bay St. Louis, MS 39521.



The "shoo fly" encircling the Choufleur live oak  
at 300 South Second Street  
in Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

## Bay Saint Louis' Shoo Fly Oak Is Registered with a New Name

By  
Shawn Prychitko

Recently a request to register the live oaks which line Nicholson Avenue in Waveland, MS, was made to the Bay-Waveland Garden Club and the Hancock County Historical Society's Live Oak Tree Registry

program. The solicitation presented a dilemma to the club and the society because a live oak growing on land owned by a city or other public entity cannot be registered with the state registry, the *Soci  t   Des Arbres*. The state organization provides the service only to private residents and land owners; however, after consultation with the Mississippi organization, an agreement was reached allowing individual **sponsorship** of these oaks by private citizens who would pay the registration



THE

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor  
Jackie Allain, PublisherPublished monthly by the  
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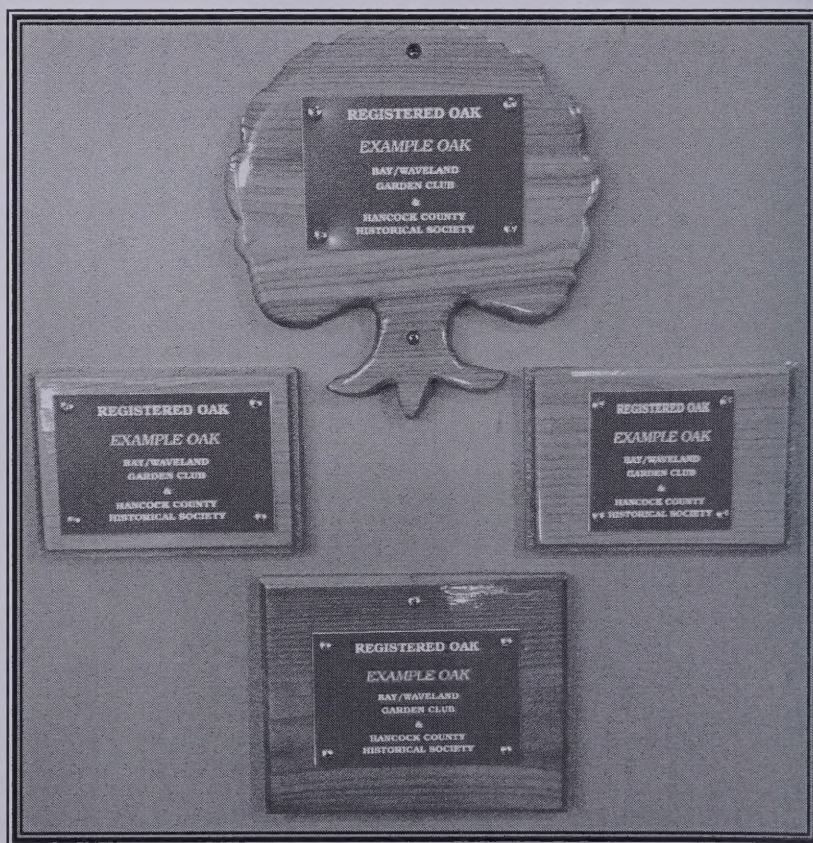
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Marianne Plum, Webmaster**LOBRANO HOUSE  
HOURS**MONDAY — FRIDAY  
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Closed: 12:00—1:00 (lunch)**MISSION STATEMENT**

"TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION."

fee.

There are many old, qualifying live oak trees in the cities of Bay Saint Louis and Waveland as well as in other areas of Hancock County that are unregistered and in need of some special attention since they are our "living landmarks." Charles Gray, the Executive Director of the Hancock County Historical Society, helped apprise Mayor Les Fillingame of Bay Saint Louis of this wonderful program by requesting to be such a sponsor of one of the live oaks growing on the grounds of the Old City Hall/Carol Vegas Park. Permission was granted, and the tree chosen is the well-known live oak facing Second Street

with the antebellum style wooden structure surrounding the trunk of the tree and known as a "shoo fly." Charles chose to rename his tree "Choufleur" which translates to cauliflower in French because when the French settlers looked at these structures which they had built they looked like cauliflower plants; however, Anglo-Saxon Southerners heard the word as *shoo fly*. The term *shoo fly* also stuck because the structure is high enough from the ground that people sitting there could catch any breeze around and keep the flies from bothering them. At some point the tree was named "Chicapoula" which is the American Indian word for



You may have your registration plaque mounted on a decorative wooden frame for an additional charge. The tree frame, shown in the photograph above, costs \$20, the smaller two rectangular frames just below it are \$10 each, and the larger rectangular frame at the bottom is \$15. Please place your order for the decorative frame when you place your order for the plaque.



nasty/bad grass. The grass growing in the park today is well maintained and relatively free of this nasty grass with the spiky stick burrs locals refer to as rock-a-chaws.

Why have such a negative shadow linger over such a lovely old tree I ask. In light of all the positivity this old tree has given to this community in providing happy memories for the numerous visitors who come to sit on the benches of this shoo fly or those who have gathered for wedding photos, city inaugurations, birthday parties, festivals, and storytellings, let us move on and register it under a new name! Choufleur is a healthy tree with a circumference of 15 feet 10 inches equating to about 168 years young.

Residents who are interested in sponsoring live oak trees on city owned sites or other public property are welcome to contact the Bay-Waveland Garden Club so that a letter of request to the proper government officials may be drawn up for approval and the necessary data may be collected and sent to the *Société Des Arbres* as well. You may find information about registering a live oak tree online at the Historical Society's web site under "Our Society/Tree Registration." The cost to purchase a plaque and register one live oak tree is \$24.00. If you would like your plaque mounted onto a decorative wooden frame, there is an additional charge. For additional information, please call the Historical Society at 228-467-4090 or stop by the Kate Lobrano House at 108 Cue Street, Bay Saint Louis.

### Sketches from Next Door to Heaven by S. G. Thigpen

*[Editor's note: The following vignettes are reminiscences of Sam Russ, who tells of life in Pearlinton seventy-five years earlier when he was growing up there. Mr. Russ was quite elderly when he gave these stories to S. G. Thigpen to be included in Next Door to Heaven, published in 1965. They are presented here with a minimum of editing.]*

#### Clothing

My mother and the girls in the family made all of our clothes. From jeans bought in a local store, they made pants that lasted for years. They made what were called hickory shirts that were about as durable as the pants.

No one wore belts back then. The pants were mostly homemade and not shaped to the body as are the ones we buy today. With a belt as the only support of the old time pants, they were likely to drop off at any time. The men all wore suspenders. The boys wore shirts with buttons on them to be attached to the pants. All the boys wore short pants back in those days until they were about 13 or 14 years old. The wearing of long pants was begun at about the time the boy began to develop into a man....

All the women's clothes were made at home. I don't think I ever remember seeing a woman wear store-bought or ready-made clothes when I was

growing up. All the women wore long skirts back then. It was a common sight to see a woman walking down the street holding her parasol in one hand and her long skirt up out of the dirt with the other hand. Most women wore bustles back in those days—at least those who needed them did so....

#### Cows, Pigs, and Chickens

Practically every family in Pearlinton kept a milk cow. That was the only way for a family to have milk and butter as none was sold in the stores back then. To keep milk was not much of a problem in winter, but in warm weather it was almost impossible to keep it from souring or turning into clabber.... Churning was a job I hated. When the milk was just right or "turned" as they used to say, it did not take long to churn, but if the milk was not just right, it would take a long time—hours it seemed to me when I had to stand there and pump the dasher up and down, up and down almost endlessly....

One can now go to stores most anywhere and buy milk and butter, but it was very different in the old days. Back then if you had dairy products to eat, you had to produce them right on your own place. We always kept a good milk cow at our house. Tending the cow and milking her were jobs for boys back then.

Another thing found at most homes then was a pig being fattened in a pen on the place. It cost very little to produce much of the family meat as the pig would be fed leftovers, slop from the kitchen, and feed grown on



the place. Nothing was wasted by the thrifty people back 75 years ago.

A few laying hens were kept by just about every family in Pearlington when I lived there. If a family wanted fresh eggs, keeping hens was almost the only way to have them, and the same was true for chickens to eat. However, stores in Pearlington would take both eggs and chickens in trade and for credit on accounts. Many a time I have carried eggs to a store and traded them for things my mother needed. Every store had a chicken coop in the rear in which to keep chickens for sale. ...There was very little cost to growing a few chickens and keeping a few laying hens as they ate scraps from the family table and would range over the place to find things to eat. Chicken feed sold in stores was unheard of 75 years ago.

### Wood

All cooking and heating was done with wood. The wood had to be cut the right length to fit the fireplace. With our big family it took plenty wood to feed the big old fireplace. Wood for the cook stove had to be cut into shorter lengths and then split into smaller pieces. Getting in wood for the fireplace and the stove, milking and feeding the cow, drawing the water, and other tasks around the house kept boys busy back in the old days doing things that boys growing up now know nothing of....

### Yards vs. Lawns

Where everybody now has lawns, everybody had yards when I grew up in Pearlington 75 years

ago. A lawn is covered with grass. A yard had all the grass cut off with a hoe and was bare of all growth except shade trees and maybe flowers around the edges and along the walk to the house. I don't remember ever even hearing the word "lawn" back in the old days.

A common ordinary hoe was used to keep the yard clean. The dead grass and weeds would be swept up into piles and burned. Brush brooms were used to sweep the yard, a job usually done by the girls of the family. Brush brooms were usually made from dogwood tree branches about five feet long because dogwood limbs lasted much longer. Brooms made of broom sage were used almost exclusively to sweep the house and sometime the yard. They were not sold in stores. Every family had to make its own.

No stores in Pearlington kept lawn mowers when I was a boy. I never saw one until I was grown. After they came into use, many people continued to use the old ways of caring for their yards. A hoe cost about \$1 and a lawn mower from \$15 to \$20. Money was hard to get back then, and \$15 was a lot of money, representing about two weeks work at the sawmill in Pearlington....

### Vegetable Gardens

Everybody in Pearlington had vegetable gardens. If we had fresh vegetables to eat, we had to grow them. None of the stores carried vegetables in stock. We always had green things growing in our garden practically all year round. We

grew both Irish and sweet potatoes. We banked the sweet potatoes for winter use, and the old people knew how to store Irish potatoes in cool, dry places to keep them from spoiling. The rich and the poor, the humble and the mighty had their own vegetable gardens. Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Andrew Jackson all mentioned in their writings that they had vegetable gardens at the White House in Washington while serving as Presidents of the United States. Vegetables fresh out of the garden are much more nourishing than vegetables that have been shipped and in any way processed. The longer vegetables are harvested before being used the more vitamins they lose. Fresh vegetables right out of the garden are much better for you.

### Mattress Making

...[B]ack in the old days there were no mattresses for sale in stores. People had to make their own...or hire them made locally....

Practically everybody along Pearl River where moss was plentiful used moss. Negroes, mostly old ones, gathered the moss and cured it. They used poles to pull moss from the trees....If more moss was gathered than there was a market for in Pearlington, the surplus was shipped to New Orleans, where there was a good demand for it.

In the curing process, the moss was first hung out on convenient fences to dry in the sun. It was then put into wash pots and boiled to destroy the life germ in the moss and then hung out to dry again.



There were a number of older black women in Pearlington who were skilled in making moss mattresses. Many people bought the necessary moss, ticking, etc., and then hired these women to make their mattresses.

Before being put into a mattress, the moss was "picked"—that is all foreign matter such as sticks, grass, etc., was picked out of it. The strands of the moss would be straightened out at the same time.

Mattress ticking was bought, cut, and sewn by hand into the right shape for a mattress with a six inch band to go around the four sides of the mattress. With everything ready boards were placed on saw horses. The prepared mattress ticking was placed on the boards with the top of the mattress left open and folded back for ease in placing the moss in the mattress. With all this done it was time to place the moss in the new mattresses.

The moss was fluffed and then laid into the mattress with the strands parallel. A uniform layer about an inch thick was laid into the bottom of the mattress. The next layer would crisscross over the first one and so on until the mattress was about eight to ten inches thick. The two top pieces of the ticking were then pulled tightly over the piled up moss and securely sewn together. The mattress in this condition bulged way up in the middle. To make the mattress level, firm, and even with the sides, a long needle threaded with heavy cord was first run through a piece of cloth which

had been folded many times down to about the size of an inch square to serve as an anchor on the bottom of the mattress. The long needle was then pushed up through the mattress and on through another folded piece of cloth similar to the one on bottom which was to serve as an anchor on the top of the mattress. The heavy chord was then pulled tightly to draw the mattress down to about the thickness of the sides of the mattress. The cord was then tied into a knot to hold it in that position. This procedure was repeated about every eight inches

all over the mattress to complete it and make it firm and even, yet resilient....

To keep the mattress in good condition and keep it comfortable to sleep on, it was remade about once a year. The moss was taken from the mattress, hung out in the sun for a day, fluffed again, and then remade just as it was originally.

#### SOURCE:

Thigpen, S. G. *Next Door to Heaven*. Kingsport, TN: Kingsport Press, Inc., 1965.

### CAN YOU HELP?



Dot Kersanac brought the above picture to the Society, and we need help identifying the children. Some have been identified; some have not; and some may have been identified incorrectly. Even though the picture is not of the best quality, it's the best we have. The identifications we have are listed below:

#### FRONT ROW:

Jesse Cowand  
Alfred Besancon  
Norman Cowand  
Earl Netto  
Willie Shieler  
Lucille Besancon  
Lydia Adam  
?  
Ester Adam

#### BACK ROW:

Sidney Fayard  
Emile Larroux  
Thompson Boy  
?  
Thompson Girl  
Mabel Adam  
Elsie Fayard  
Mae (?) Adam



*—from the President's Desk*

*The Historical Society is starting a Grant Writing Committee to help it accomplish its long term goals. The Society has accumulated a wealth of historical information about the origins of Hancock County and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. It also preserves information about current events that will become the basis of future research by individuals and groups who long to understand more about who we are.*

*The preservation of this material requires things like building maintenance, capital improvements, and technical resources, and the list goes on. Our current financial resources are wholly inadequate for the job, and we are therefore turning to foundations, corporations, and the like who may be interested in helping us.*

*If you have some experience as a grant writer or if you would like to contribute to a worthwhile endeavor and have the time available, then we hope you will consider joining our committee.*

*Contact us at (228) 467-4090 or send an email to hancock-countyhis@bellsouth.net.*

*Sincerely,  
Louis Fuchs, President  
Hancock County Historical Society*

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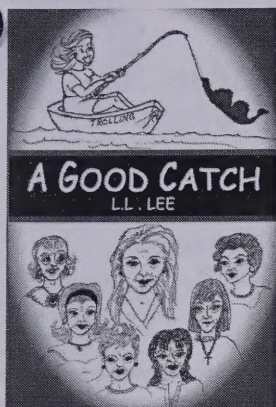


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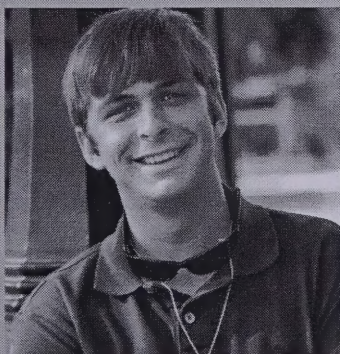
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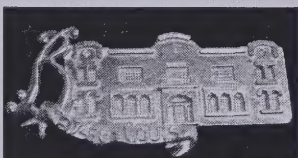
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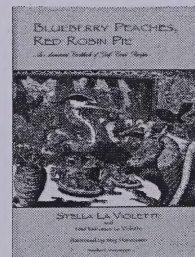


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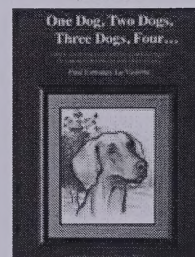
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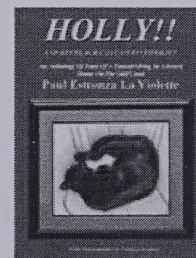
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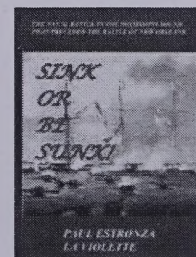
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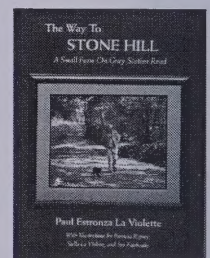
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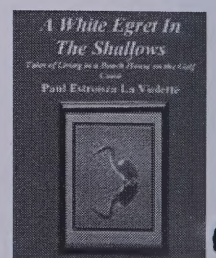
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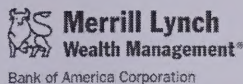
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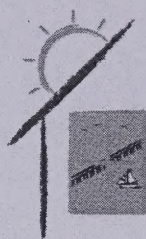


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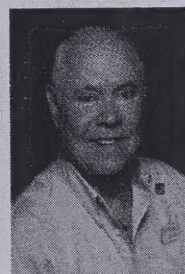
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